

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001335

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA AND USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/09/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: PROTESTANT HAS GOOD SHOT AT HAITIAN PRESIDENCY IF
HE CAN MOBILIZE VOTERS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Douglas M. Griffiths for Reason
1.4(d)

1. (SBU) Summary: Pastor Chavannes Jeune of the National Union of Christians for the Renovation of Haiti (UNCRH) discussed his pending candidacy for president with the Ambassador. Jeune said UNCRH would field candidates at all levels and there was "extraordinary consensus" that the Protestant community, which had traditionally avoided participating in politics, was tired of the current situation and would back a "moral candidate." Jeune believes that if he can mobilize the Protestant voting population, he would win November's presidential election. Jeune's fundraising activities would, if successful, give him a significant advantage. End Summary.

2. (U) On May 4, Ambassador met with Pastor Chavannes Jeune of the National Union of Christians for the Renovation of Haiti (UNCRH) to discuss Jeune's pending candidacy for president. Jeune explained that Haiti has seen a decrease in the number of Catholics and an exponential increase of Protestants over the past decade. Jeune cited a 2002 study done by the Center of Economic and Social Research for Training and Development (CRESFED). (Note: This organization is led by OPL's Executive Secretary Suzy Castor, widow of OPL founder Gerard Pierre Charles. End Note.) According to the study, nearly 42 percent of the Haitian population is Protestant. Jeune quoted a more exact figure of 39.2 percent. (Note: The study was based in Port-au-Prince and the results may not accurately reflect the current religious breakdown throughout the country. End Note.)

3. (U) Jeune does have national name recognition, particularly in the south. He hosted a radio talk show for several years on the religious-based station Radio Lumiere which broadcasts throughout Haiti and can be heard in parts of the Dominican Republic. Jeune claimed that his church has 200,000 members and if one includes the other sects, 1.8 million possible votes (out of a possible 4 million potential voters.) Jeune believes that if he can mobilize the Protestant voting population of Haiti, he would win November's presidential election.

Raising Funds for Elections

4. (SBU) Jeune had just returned from Canada where he headlined a \$25 per plate fund-raiser that attracted 700 participants. He was to attend a \$100 per plate fund-raiser in Miami on May 6. Jeune said UNCRH would receive matching funds for every dollar the party raised from Partners International, an organization of Christian businessman based in Michigan (www.partnersworldwide.org). To date, Jeune told the Ambassador, UNCRH had raised \$150,000 and with matching funds had approximately \$300,000 to finance the campaign.

5. (SBU) Jeune said UNCRH would field candidates at all levels, from the city councils to the presidency. He said the party was founded in November 2004 and is awaiting formal recognition by the Ministry of Justice that Jeune expects "within a couple of weeks." His party planned to train 25,000 civic educators to branch out throughout the country and teach citizens about their civic duty over a 4-month period. Jeune visited USAID in Washington on the margins of his attendance at the Inter-American Dialogue's forum on elections. Jeune said he met with the International Republican Institute's Chief of Party Walter Turnbull (who is now in Port-au-Prince) in D.C. Jeune said he already had a team in place discussing a 25-year development plan that has become the party's platform. Jeune said that if UNCRH wins, he would be open to forming a coalition government.

Seeking Alliances & Pushing for a Primary

6. (C) Jeune said that he is pushing other Christian-affiliated parties to hold some sort of primary election to determine who would be the Protestant candidate. He told the Ambassador that Pastor Luc Mesadieu, leader of the Gonaives-based Christian Movement for a New Haiti (MOCHRENA) party, had ruled out participating in any sort of primary. (Note: Mesadieu announced his candidacy for the

presidency at MOCHRENA's April 9 conference. End Note.)
Jeune said this intransigence on the part of Mesadieu had led 11 members of MOCHRENA's governing committee to resign from their posts.

17. (U) Prior to meeting with the Ambassador, Jeune had attended a meeting of nearly 300 pastors from throughout Haiti at Kaliko Beach (located approximately 40 miles from Port-au-Prince). Jeune said there was "extraordinary consensus" that the Protestant community had to back a "moral candidate" if it wanted the country to "become moral" and find its way out of its current abyss. Jeune said that the Protestant community had traditionally avoided participating in politics, but that they were tired of the current situation and had decided to get involved. Jeune told us that the church would not formally endorse a candidate but would find ways, informally, to spread the word. (Note: Press reports May 9 said Protestant leaders emphasized separation of the church and politics and that it would not back any mandate or any particular candidate, but was not averse to each citizen's freedom to be called to serve the country. End note.)

18. (C) Asked about a Gerard Jean-Juste candidacy, Jeune replied that former Prime Minister Cherestal or former President Preval had a better chance of representing Lavalas, and believed that Aristide would not bless a Jean-Juste candidacy. Asked about Aristide's potential to sabotage the elections, Jeune replied that it depended on the international community, the Haitian National Police, and the Haitian population. Jeune said that if either one succumbs to Aristide's "psychological warfare," the population would not get out and vote.

19. (SBU) Jeune said UNCRH is pursuing talks with non-Protestant parties including the Social Democrats, OPL, and KID. These talks, according to Jeune, are not directed toward establishing a formal alliance or fusion of parties. Rather, they are discussing a governability pact. (Note: This oft-mentioned notion requires the losing party to work as a loyal opposition to the victor from this year's elections. The goal is to overcome the Haitian political tradition of the opposition being exiled and/or undermining the authority of the elected government in power. End Note.) Jeune said his first act as president would be to issue a pardon for all political crimes to enable the country to achieve national reconciliation and have a fresh start.

10. (C) Comment: Jeune's Protestant electorate, if mobilized, could carry a candidate to victory, or at least play a significant role in determining the outcome. The problem is that the Protestants have traditionally shied away from politics, and have never been able to forge sufficient unity among a multiplicity of denominations. 2005 could indeed be a turning point, however, if Jeune is to be believed. Failing that, Jeune admitted, he would be "handing the presidency to Evans Paul" (of KID). End comment.

11. (U) Bio Note: Jeune studied in the United States, and speaks English well.
GRIFFITHS